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26. EXTENSION OF RANGE OF *ESOMUS THERMOICOS* (PISCES: CYPRINIDAE: RASBORINAE) TO KERALA

Esomus thermoicos Valenciennes 1842 was described from the hot springs at Kanniya, Sri Lanka (type locality). It was thought to be restricted to Sri Lanka until 1992, when it was found in the Kalakad Wildlife Sanctuary, Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu, India (Rema Devi 1992). The present record of the species from a freshwater pond adjacent to Mangalampuzha, a tributary of Bharathapuzha, extends its range of distribution to Kerala. The present report is based on three specimens averaging 85 mm SL collected during 1997.

Esomus thermoicos (Val.)

Nuria thermoicos Valenciennes 1842, *Hist. nat. Poiss.*; 16: 238; pl. 472

Esomus thermoicos: Hora & Mukerji 1928, *Rec. Ind. Mus.*; 30(1): 44.

Esomus danrica thermoicos: Munro 1955, *Marine and freshwater fishes of Ceylon*: 42, pl. 7.

Distinguishing features

D i 7; A iii 5; P i 13-14; V i 7.

Esomus thermoicos is a heavy bodied species and the length of its head is nearly equal to the depth of the body, which is about 4.4 times in standard length and the maxillary barbels extend nearly to the tip of the pectoral fin. Lateral

line with 32-34 scales.

Distribution: Sri Lanka; INDIA: Kalakad Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu and wetlands of Kerala.

Remarks: Dr. P.E.P. Deraniyagala of the Colombo Museum informed Dr. S.L. Hora of Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta that no *Esomus danrica* was to be found within a radius of 300 yards of the hot springs at Kanniya, Sri Lanka, judging from two collections of fishes from these springs. Other fishes including the peculiar *Puntius (Barbus) thermalis* were also absent in Kannian springs (Talwar and Jhingran 1991).

From India, this species has so far been reported only from Kalakad WLS, Tamil Nadu (Rema Devi 1992). The present report extends its distribution to Kerala.

We are grateful to Dr. K. Rema Devi, Scientist, ZSI, Southern Regional Station, Chennai, for confirming our identification of the species.

February 14, 1998

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